

# Ellen gets Her Man

SECOND INSTALLMENT

SYNOPSIS: Ellen Mackay, on her way from school at Winnipeg to join her father at Fort Edson, misses the boat by which she was to travel. Hearing that another boat is to start north in the morning, Ellen goes to the owner, John Benham, and begs him to give her passage. To her surprise he flatly refuses.

"This is Angus Mackay's lass Pierre," announced Pat.

Bierre Buschard murmured a sorrowful greeting and bowed clumsily.

Ellen smiled and advanced close to the giant riverman. "You are going to help me, Pierre?"

"Oui, oui, mam'selle," rumbled the big fellow. "M'sieu Benham, he's be mad lak' wolf at Pierre Buschard, but Pierre do what he can. You come wif' Pierre now mam'selle, and we must be quiet lak' lynx w'en he stalk dat rabbit."

Ellen, victim to a sudden tumultuous thrill, scurried away and donned her mackinaw and cap. Back in the big room she stood on her tiptoes and pecked Pat McClatchey on one whiskery cheek with her pursed lips. "I'll remember this, Pat," she promised.

"This little enough, lass. Now stick to your guns and I gamble this will come out well enough. I feel sure of your safety, for whatever else he may be, John Benham is a gentleman and the finest riverman in the north. Now run along with Pierre and do just as he says."

He has already taken care of your luggage."

Pat gave Ellen's arm a squeeze and shook hands with Pierre Buschard. The next thing Ellen knew Pierre had taken her by the elbow and was guiding her steps down the sloping bank of the river.

It was still out there, vastly except for the ceaseless beat of the river while the night throbbled to the power of the limitless wilderness which stretched away to the north. A faint, haunting, quivering note drifted down from among the massed stars. The geese were winging north, even she. Ellen found herself thrilling with a strange, wild ecstasy.

There was a big Peterborough canoe pulled up on the shore, and in the bow of this Pierre placed the girl. Then he shoved off, balancing himself deftly in the stern, while he lifted and dipped a gleaming paddle. The buoyant craft tumbled before the grip of the river, but headed against the current and stole silently upstream.

Ahead a fitting point loomed. Still as a wind-blown shadow they rounded the point and drifted backwards again. Uncouth shapes took form in the night. Ellen recognized the loaded scows of John Benham's brigade. The canoe drifted in and gently nosed the nearest scow. Silently Pierre stepped to the scow and held the Peterborough firm.

"Come, mam'selle," he whispered. Ellen stepped out beside him. Pierre indicated the massed cargo of freight upon the scow. He lifted up one edge of the tarpaulin which covered the pile. "Under here," he breathed. "You must hide. For a day and a night you must hide, mam'selle. Don we will about dat Cascade Rapid. M'sieu Benham, he's not send you back after dat. I have put out food and water and blankets, mam'selle. And Pierre, he's watch out for you."

Ellen gripped Pierre's huge paw with both her slim hands. "You are kind, Pierre," she murmured. "I will never forget this."

"Bien," he grinned. "She's make me happy to help, mam'selle. You hide now, quick."

Her heart beating thunderously, Ellen crept beneath the edge of the tarpaulin and crouched quietly. She felt the slight quiver of the scow as Pierre left it. Alone now alone! Definitely committed to the great adventure. The future might bring anything, but queerly enough, Ellen felt no fear. Only a stirring anticipation.

She remembered those strange, marvellously clear, almost hypnotic eyes of John Benham. The next time they rested on her what would they mirror? Surprise, yes. Anger

## Rubber-Tired Covered Wagon Headed East



St. Louis.—They look like '48ers, except that they're headed east and their covered wagon is rubber-tired. They're from California, youths headed for Washington to the American Youth Congress, to urge support on a senate bill providing training and employment of deserving youth. They are, left to right George Kauffman, Cecil McKelby, Malby Roberts, Selma Marks, Nathan Brewman and Dorothy Powers.

—almost surely. Yet Ellen felt comfort somehow.

It was cosy there in the darkness beneath the tarpaulin. She stirred and felt about her. Then she blessed simple, big-hearted Pierre Buschard. For in a crevice between the massed bales and boxes of the cargo was a bundle of food and the sleek, chill contours of a jar of water.

Ellen smuggled down into the blankets, covering herself with the warm comforting folds. After a bit she relaxed all tension. The scow rose and fell to the surge of the river, creaking and complaining at its tether like a blooded horse, anxious to be gone.

Ellen's thoughts grew dreamy and clouded with sweet languor. The scow became a crane and the great mysterious force of the river a gentle hand to rock it. Presently she slept.

When Ellen Mackay awoke again it was with a start and a short gasp of surprise. For a moment she scarcely knew where she was. Then all that had happened during the night came back to her and she relaxed. Close beside her a deep voice was booming. A moment she listened, then smiled. Her perturbation left her. In its place came a flood of warm, dancing thrills. She began humming softly, keeping time with the cadence of the song the dapper riverman was singing. It was the old wild song of the river brigades, the Chanson de Voyageur. And it meant that the scows of John Benham's brigade were at last freed of their tethers, that they were now part and parcel of the great spring migration into the distant wilderness of the Three River Country.

The chill of early morning was still in the air, and Ellen was grateful for the warmth of her blankets. She lay there quietly, queerly content. Strange the transition wrought within the space of two short weeks. She thought of the school life she had left behind her, of the companionship, the gaiety, the luxury. A far cry indeed from her present position. Yet she knew no regret. It all seemed queerly vague and lacking in outline, somewhat like a half-remembered dream. Suddenly she realized that the inexplicable restlessness which had actuated her during

the scows were still a good three yards apart a big, bare-headed figure cleared the space in one clean leap of splendidly co-ordinated muscles, and a moment later John Benham was beside her.

"Well," he said slowly, his voice steady and deep. "I see you've won. And by the grin on Pierre Buschard I can guess how you did it."

Ellen's courage came back with a rush. She smiled. "I was desperate," she answered. "It was the only way. I hope you will not be angry with Pierre. He was very kind. And as I said at first—I will pay you well for your trouble."

Benham raised a depreciating hand. A queer hardness twisted his mouth and a certain glint of triumph shone in his eyes. "My payment is already assured," he said grimly. "I'm a good hater. I'll exact my pound of flesh."

Ellen stared at him. In a space of seconds he had become somehow stern and savage. A ripple of fear shot through her. It couldn't be . . . surely.

"Don't worry personally," he stated with a swift harsh laugh, reading her thoughts with disconcerting ease. "You'll be quite safe. And Pierre is an old and valued friend. He meant well."

A crimson tide again flowed across Ellen's face. "Thank you," she said stiffly. "I'm not afraid."

Benham nodded and turned away. Going back to the crew he snapped a few terse orders. The Creeks leaped muscular bodies against the sweeps and under Benham's directions drove the scow up to the bank and tethered it there.

Ellen's uneasiness grew. Was he going to send her back after all? Was her triumph to be so short-lived? Then she breathed more easily. Benham, axe in hand, had leaped ashore and was swinging the gleaming blade in swift, powerful strokes among the slender boles of a dwarf birch thicket. In ten minutes' time he had felled and trimmed a full dozen of the tapering poles and had passed them aboard. A moment later the scow was again out in the river, heading northward.

(Continued Next Week)

## RAYMOND R. HAYES ENLISTS IN MARINES

Raymond R. Hayes on March 5 was accepted for service in the United States Marine Corps and has been assigned to the marine barracks at Paris Island, S. C., for training and duty, according to an announcement by Captain A. C. Small, district marine corps recruit-

ing officer, with headquarters in Savannah, Ga.

Young Hayes graduated from Boone high school in 1935, and is now out to see the world with the marines. He is the son of Mrs. Lou Hayes, and is a former member of the civilian conservation corps.

Young men in this vicinity desiring information concerning enlistment may write to the Savannah office. Enlistments are now open. Captain Small stated, and application blanks will be sent on request.

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### CAN YOU IMAGINE

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